goods. and services, and various non-tangible benefits that accrue from our forests. As regards investment into the fotdly rector 0.94 *person on the* total public sector outlay has been allocated to this sector during the Eighth Five Year Plan.

(b) There is no international standard for forest cover. The National Farest Policy of India has stipulated that a minimum of one third of the total land area of the country should be under forest or tree cover,

(c) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as amenaed is Forest Act 1927, and a number of State Forest Acts are enforced to ensure strict control over diversion or loss of forest coverage in the country. Government has also taken a number of steps to incr ase he forest cove in the COUNTERY-try. These include improved protection measures, conservation and development of forests, rehabilitation of degnded forests afforestration scheme social forestry schemes, participatory forest managements etc.

(d) Andaman and Nicobar Islands have the highest percentage (92.4 %) of forest cover followed by Miorain (89.4%). Haryana has got the lowest percentage (1.2%) of forest cover among the states. The Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Pondichery have no forest cover. Pondichery have not legally classified forest area. Harvane which other falls in the Indo-Gangetic belt has had less forest area because of agricultural activities being considered more suitable in the past. Social Forestry activities have now been given high priority in the State.

Wteasnres to reduce Pollution

2266. SHRI BTSHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of ENVTRON-HjENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:,-

(a) whether Government ate aware of die if fact thaat the survey conducted by "Rajiv Gandhi Foundation" tinder 'Environmental Literacy Drive? found about 63 zones affected by radiation hazards; and

(b) if so what measures. Government are taking to reduce pollution in these zones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMFNT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) A report alleging that radiation hazars is on the nise in Lucknow has been published in a section of the press. This report is based on a press release issued by Environment Research Laboratory, which is implementing the project on Environmental Literacy funded by Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. This has, however, been contradicted by the surveys conducted by scientists of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. These surveys indicate that radiation levels in Lucknow are in the range normally found in these areas and are due to the natural background radiation. AERB scientists have demonstrated that the apparent high levels, of radiation reported by Environmental Research Laboratory are due to the deficiencies of the radiation measurement instruments and not due to any actual presence of extraneous radiation.

(b) Does not arise.

Ban on mining in the country

2267. SHRI SHJRINDER KUMAR STNGLA: Will the Minister of EN-VIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) which are the areas m our country where Government have banned mining activity;

(b) whether an assessment of the damage done to the environment pcology and wildlife by siuch mining activity has been made;

(c) whit steps are being taken. to implement the ban effectively; and.